

5.0 OTHER REQUIRED CEQA SECTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIONAL CEQA REQUIREMENTS DISCUSSED IN THIS SECTION

This section discusses broader questions posed by the CEQA. These include significant effects that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels, irreversible/irretrievable commitment of resources, the balance between short- and long-term uses of the environment, and growth-inducing impacts.

5.2 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED TO LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Effects on all environmental resources were evaluated to determine any impacts that would remain significant after mitigation. There are Class I impacts related to hazards. Even with the application of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, the pipeline would cause a risk of serious injury or fatality. This Class I impact was determined based upon California or local laws, regulations, ordinances, policies, or standards.

5.3 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WOULD BE IRREVERSIBLE IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED

The CEQA Guidelines, sections 15126.2(c) and 15127, require that an EIR consider significant irreversible environmental changes which would be involved in the proposed actions should they be implemented. An impact would fall into this category if:

- the project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources during the project,
- the primary and secondary impacts of the project would generally commit future generations to similar uses (e.g., a highway provides access to a previously remote area); or
- the project would involve uses in which irreversible damage could result from any potential environmental accidents associated with the project.

Determination of whether the proposed Project would result in significant irreversible effects requires a determination of whether key resources would be degraded or destroyed with little possibility of restoring them.

1 Construction of the Project would require fossil fuels, a nonrenewable resource, to
2 power construction vehicles. The consumption of this energy resource results in
3 increased generation of pollutants and continued dependence on oil and its associated
4 known and unknown political, military, and financial implications. The operation phase
5 of the Project would allow for the transport of additional non-renewable resources
6 (natural gas), although the Project itself would not utilize significant amounts of non-
7 renewable resources. While the Project would facilitate the delivery of non-renewable
8 resources, these resources would be exploited and expended now and in the near
9 future regardless of the proposed Project as the production of natural gas that would be
10 distributed by the Project has been, or will be, approved by permitting agencies.
11 Therefore, the Project would facilitate movement of natural gas in north San Joaquin
12 County and southeast Sacramento County.

13 Additional resources that could be irretrievably lost could include soils (resulting from
14 water and wind erosion in disturbed areas); water (used for hydrostatic testing and dust
15 control); wildlife habitat and vegetation communities (potentially lost on a short term
16 basis during construction and on a long term basis due to the conversion of
17 approximately 1,560 square feet of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
18 Conservation Easement to PG&E's utility easement). The potential also exists for
19 accidental pipeline rupture to impact public health and safety. Although the risk of
20 pipeline rupture cannot be completely eliminated, the proposed Project has been
21 designed to meet or exceed all safety requirements. The proposed Project would also
22 result in annual fugitive emissions of methane, which would contribute to the State's
23 contribution of greenhouse gas emissions.

24 The proposed Project could transport significant volumes of natural gas to customers in
25 southeast Sacramento County and Elk Grove. Its operation would be consistent with
26 Federal policies encouraging competitive natural gas transportation services. For these
27 reasons, the limited irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments described
28 above are acceptable.

29 **5.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

30 The State CEQA Guidelines require the consideration and discussion of growth-
31 inducing impacts of a proposed project in an EIR. As specified in Section 15126.2(d) of
32 the CEQA Guidelines, an EIR would:

33 *Discuss the ways in which the proposed Project could foster economic or*
34 *population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or*

indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion if a waste water treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

The following six criteria are used as a guide in evaluating the growth-inducing potential of the proposed Project:

1. Would the Project foster growth or remove obstacles to economic or population growth?

The proposed Project does not include lateral lines to serve new areas; rather, it would be connected to the existing Line 108 pipeline system and would be intended to enhance the operational flexibility of the existing system. The area that would be served by the proposed Project is already served by various fuel supplies, including natural gas. The demand for natural gas is a result of, not a precursor to, development in the region. Although the Project would increase the efficiency with which natural gas is made available, the Project objective is not to provide a new source of gas. The region is not dependent solely on this Project for delivery of various natural gas sources. Although the proposed Project would increase capacity to serve new uses in the area, these projected uses have already been approved through the adoption of local general plans.

2. Would the Project provide new employment?

The proposed Project would provide temporary employment for an average of 75 workers. No new permanent positions would result from operation of the Project.

3. Would the Project provide new access to undeveloped or under developed areas?

The proposed Project does not involve the creation of any new permanent roads. PG&E would use only existing access roads for Project construction and operation

activities. Workers in the area would be trained prior to the start of the Project to ensure that they do not degrade environmental resources in sensitive areas.

4. Would the Project extend public services to a previously unserved area?

The proposed Project would not directly extend public service to areas currently unserved by natural gas. The Project would increase capacity of the existing pipeline system in the area.

5. Would the Project tax existing community services?

The amount of temporary, non-local workers would be small compared to current populations in the Project area. Additionally, local communities have adequate infrastructure and services to meet the need of temporary workers that would be associated with the Project.

6. Would the Project cause development elsewhere?

The customers potentially served by the proposed Project would not be solely dependent on the Project for access to natural gas. In addition, projected new uses that the proposed Project would serve have already been approved through the adoption of local general plans. Accordingly, the addition or absence of the gas supply from the Project would not likely affect development in the region or elsewhere.

Summary

The proposed Project would not cause development, economic growth, or population growth. The potential customers that would be served by the Project are not solely dependent on the Project for access to natural gas. Although the proposed Project would serve new uses in the area, these projected uses have already been approved through the adoption of local general plans. Therefore, the proposed Project would not cause any significant growth-inducing impacts either directly or indirectly in the surrounding environment.